

V. I. Lenin

The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. (B.)

APRIL 24–29 (MAY 7–12), 1917

Preliminary Draft Alterations in the R.S.D.L.P. Party Programme^{7}

At the end of the preamble (after the words “the standpoint of the proletariat”) insert:

World capitalism has at the present time, i.e., since about the beginning of the twentieth century, reached the stage of imperialism. **Imperialism, or the epoch of finance capital, is a high stage of development of the capitalist economic system, one in which monopolist associations of capitalists—syndicates, cartels and trusts—have assumed decisive importance: in which enormously concentrated banking capital has fused with industrial capital; in which the export of capital to foreign countries has assumed vast proportions: in which the whole world has been divided up territorially among the richer countries, and the economic carve-up of the world among international trusts has begun.**

Imperialist wars, i.e., wars for world domination, for markets for banking capital and for the subjugation of small and weaker nations, are inevitable under such a state of affairs. The first great imperialist war, the war of 1914–17, is precisely such a war.

The extremely high level of development which world capitalism in general has attained, **the replacement of free competition by monopoly capitalism**, the fact that the banks and the capitalist associations have prepared the machinery for the social regulation of the process of production and distribution of products, the horrors, misery, ruin, and brutalisation caused by the imperialist war—all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution.

That era has dawned.

Only a proletarian socialist revolution can lead humanity out of the impasse which imperialism and imperialist wars have created. Whatever difficulties, the revolution may have to encounter, whatever possible temporary setbacks or waves of counter-revolution it may have to contend with, the final victory of the proletariat is inevitable.

Objective conditions make it the urgent task of the day to prepare the proletariat in every way for the revolution and resolutely break with the bourgeois perversion of socialism, which has taken the upper hand in the official Social-Democratic parties in the form of a social-chauvinist trend (that is, socialism in words, chauvinism in fact, or the use of the “defend your country” slogan to cover up defence of capitalist interests in imperialist wars), and also in the form of a Centre trend (i.e., unprincipled, helpless vacillation between social-chauvinism and revolutionary internationalist proletarian struggle) ^[1] for the conquest of political power in order to carry out the economic and political measures which are the sum and substance of the socialist revolution.

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The fulfilment of this task, which calls for the fullest trust, the closest fraternal ties, and direct unity of revolutionary action on the part of the working class in all the advanced countries, is impossible without an immediate break in principle with the bourgeois perversion of socialism, which has gained the upper hand among the leadership of the great majority of the official Social-Democratic parties. Such a perversion is, on the one hand, the social-chauvinist trend, socialism in word and chauvinism in deed, the defence of the predatory interests of “one’s own” national bourgeoisie under the guise of “defence of one’s country”; and, on the other hand, the equally wide international trend of the so-called Centre, which stands for unity with the social-chauvinists and for the preservation or correction of the bankrupt Second International, and which vacillates between social-chauvinism and the internationalist revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for the achievement of a socialist system.

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The experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, which created the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies and a number of similar organisations, thereby confirmed the experience of the Paris Commune, which consisted in the fact that the proletariat must have a state for the period of transition to socialism, but this state ^[2] **must not be a conventional type of state**, but the immediate, massive and wholesale organisation of the armed workers to substitute for the old instruments of administration: the standing army, the police and the civil service. Explanation to the proletariat of the tasks of such a state – capable both of consolidating the gains of the revolution in general and of ensuring the most peaceful and balanced transition to socialism – must constitute one of the principal tasks of the proletarian party alongside its struggle against the representatives of the bankrupt Second (1889–1914) International, who have distorted Marxism and betrayed socialism on the dictatorship of the proletariat question.

Monopoly capitalism, which has been developing into state-monopoly capitalism in a number of advanced countries with especial rapidity during the war, means

gigantic socialisation of production and, consequently, complete preparation of the objective conditions for the establishment of a socialist society.^[3]

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In the **minimum programme**, the whole beginning (from the words “On the path” down to § 1) should be crossed out, and replaced by the following:

In Russia at the present moment, when the Provisional Government, which is part and parcel of the landowner and capitalist class and enjoys the confidence—necessarily unstable—of the broad mass of the petty-bourgeois population, has undertaken to convene a Constituent Assembly, the immediate duty of the party of the proletariat is to fight for a political system which will best guarantee economic progress and the rights of the people in general, and **make possible the least painful transition to socialism** in particular.

The party is fighting and helping the masses to wage an immediate struggle for a democratic republic, starting the implementation of the freedoms by the masses’ organisation on their own, from below, and **working for the establishment not of a bourgeois parliamentary republic**, with its special guarantees both for the domination of the capitalists and for the possibility of using force against the masses through the retention of the old organs of mass oppression: the police, the standing army and the civil service, **but of a more democratic proletarian-peasant republic** in which the retention of these organs of oppression is impossible and inadmissible, and where the state power belongs directly to the workers and peasants who are armed to a man.

§ 1. Supreme power in the state must be vested entirely in the people’s representatives, who shall be elected by the people and be subject to recall at any time, and who shall constitute **a single popular assembly, a single chamber**.

§ 2. Add:

Proportional representation at all elections; all delegates and elected officials, without exception, to be subject to recall at any time upon the decision of a majority of their electors.

§ 3. Add:

No supervision or control from above over the decisions and acts of regional and local self-governments.

§ 9 to read:

The right of all member nations of the state to freely secede and form independent states. The republic of the Russian nation must attract other nations or nationalities not by force, but exclusively by voluntary agreement on the question of forming a common state. **The unity and fraternal alliance of the workers of all countries are incompatible with the use of force, direct or indirect, against other nationalities.**

§ 11 to read:

Judges and all other officials, both civil and military, to be elected by the people with the right to recall any of them at any time by decision of a majority of their electors. Salaries to all officials to be not above the wages of a skilled worker, 300–500 rubles, depending on the number of family members and their earnings; unconditional prohibition for officials to supplement their salaries with income from other sources.

§ 12 to read:

The police and standing army to be replaced by the universally armed people; workers and other employees to receive regular wages from the capitalists for the time devoted to public service in the people's militia.

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§ 14 of the political section, § 5 and others of the economic section should be, *like the whole of the economic section*, specially re-examined by commissions consisting of trade union workers and teachers.

Alter the fiscal clause of the programme (following the words “on incomes and inheritances”) insert:

The high level of development of capitalism already achieved in banking and in the trustified branches of industry, on the one hand, and the economic disruption caused by the imperialist war, everywhere evoking a demand for state and public control of the production and distribution of all staple products, on the other, induce the party to **demand the nationalisation of the banks, syndicates (trusts), etc.**

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The agrarian programme should be replaced by an agrarian resolution (see its text separately)^[4] or rewritten in accordance with it.^[5]

The concluding part of the programme (the last two paragraphs from the words: “In the endeavour to achieve”) to be entirely deleted.

FOR THE PROGRAMME
BETTER VARIANT^[6]

The party of the proletariat cannot rest content with a bourgeois parliamentary democratic republic, which throughout the world preserves and strives to perpetuate the monarchist instruments for the oppression of the masses, namely, the police, the standing army, and the privileged bureaucracy.

The party fights for a more democratic workers’ and peasants’ republic, in which the police and the standing army will be abolished and **replaced by the universally armed people**, by a people’s militia; all officials will be not only elective, but also subject to recall at any time upon the demand of a majority of the electors; all officials, without exception, will be paid at a rate not exceeding the average wage of a competent worker; parliamentary representative institutions will be gradually replaced by Soviets of people’s representatives (from various classes and professions, or from various localities), functioning as both legislative and executive bodies.

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Notes

^[1] The text from “for the revolution....” to “proletarian struggle)” is crossed out in the MS.—*Ed.*

^[2] The text from “The experience of the Russian revolutions...” to “but this state” is crossed out in the MS. The end of the paragraph was left standing inadvertently; it was written on a separate sheet, at the bottom of which there is a note in an unknown hand: “Add: Apparatus for the regulation of production is ready in the form of trusts and concentration of banks” (see

Lenin's insertion in the "Proposed Amendments to the Doctrinal, Political and Other Sections of the Programme", present edition, Vol. 24, p. 459).—*Ed.*

{3} The text from "Monopoly capitalism..." to "socialist society" is crossed out in the MS.—*Ed.*

{4} See "Resolution on the Agrarian Question", present edition, Vol. 24, pp. 290–93.—*Ed.*

{5} See "Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme", *ibid.*, p. 463.—*Ed.*

{6} This variant is included in the "Proposed Amendments to the Doctrinal, Political and Other Sections of the Programme" (see present edition, Vol. 24, p. 461).—*Ed.*

{7} This was written by Lenin for the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) (see Note 536). It became the basis for "Proposed Amendments to the Doctrinal Political and Other Sections of the Programme" which was published in Lenin's pamphlet *Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme* (see present edition, Vol. 24, pp. 459–63). p. 418

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